Schemes for Upliftment of Weaker Sections

2557. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD : Will ihc Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to slate :

(a) whether any schemes have been/being launched by Government for upliftment of the weaker sections of the society';

(b) the funds allocated for these schemes for 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2000; and

(c) the amount actually released till date to the State Governments for the purpose. State-wise particularly for the State of Jammu & Kashmir ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATl MANEKA GANDHI) ; (a) All schemes being implemented by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment are aimed at the welfare of weaker sections of the Society. These schemes *inter-alia* include schemes for educational development of SCs, STs, OBCs and Minorities etc., schemes for their social and economic empowerment, providing support and opportunities for self employment, supporting NGOs and PRIs for welfare schemes for various weaker sections etc.

(b) The funds allocated to this Ministry (including Tribal Affairs) during 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2000 are Rs. 1208.57 crores, Rs. 1602.18 crores and Rs. 1843.57 crores respectively.

(c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Plan for Rehabilitation of the Capaitiated Persons

2558. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are considering or have considered any plan for socio-econonuc progress and rehabilitation of blind, deaf and dumb persons, and

(b) if so, broad features thereof ?